

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	11 NOVEMBER 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	CAVERSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL ZEBRA CROSSING - RESULTS OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORT	WARDS:	THAMES
LEAD OFFICER:	JEMMA THOMAS	TEL:	0118 937 2101
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT ENGINEER	E-MAIL:	Network.management@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks a Sub-Committee decision on the outcome of a statutory consultation for the proposed implementation of a new zebra crossing, intended to support active travel to/from Caversham Primary School.
- 1.2 The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the feedback received during the statutory consultation when making their decision.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 - Anonymised feedback received during the statutory consultation.
- 1.4 Appendix 2 - Drawing showing the location and detail of the proposed zebra crossing.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 That the Sub-Committee considers the feedback in Appendix 1 and agrees to either implement, amend or reject the proposal.
- 2.3 That respondents to the statutory consultation be informed of the decision of the Sub-Committee accordingly, following publication of the agreed minutes of the meeting.
- 2.4 That officers progress the delivery of the zebra crossing, if agreed for implementation.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposals align with the principles of the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The zebra crossing proposal will complement the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy by removing barriers to the greater use of sustainable, healthy transport options.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Current Position

- 4.1 In 2018, the Council's Policy Committee agreed to a saving against the school crossing patroller budget but committed to reviewing crossing facilities at the borough's schools. While this saving has since been revised, it was identified that Caversham Primary School could benefit from the implementation of a controlled crossing (zebra).

The school is currently supported by a crossing patroller located on Kidmore Road, to the southern side of its junction with Oakley Road. This location is clearly a desire-line for school travel and does not require children to cross Oakley Road further on, but it is a challenging location for the installation of a zebra crossing. There are several nearby driveway accesses and relatively narrow footways on either side.

- 4.2 Officers developed a proposal that places the crossing as close to the desire-line as possible and commissioned an independent road safety audit for this design. Increasing the width of the footway (and therefore narrowing the road) was one of the expected recommendations of this audit, as the existing footway was not considered sufficiently wide to accommodate numerous pedestrians. No other significant issues were raised in the audit.

Officers have, therefore, developed a final design proposal for the crossing, as shown in Appendix 2.

- 4.3 A legal statutory consultation was carried out between the 19th August - 8th September 2021. 63 responses were received. 15 objections, 47 support and 1 comment. This anonymised feedback is contained in the Appendix 1 table.
- 4.4 Objectors to the proposal have made comments including concerns about the placement of the crossing and its proximity to the nearby junction, as well as the proposal to narrow the road at the crossing point. Some have said that the existing manned crossing is adequate for this location and that a zebra crossing would not be required outside the school hours. Others have suggested that other locations would be more suitable for a crossing and some are concerned about driveway access and light pollution into nearby houses.

Options Proposed

- 4.5 The proposed crossing location is on the most desirable crossing line, which is currently used by many children attending Caversham primary school. While it would likely be at its busiest during journeys to and from school, it would also be a useful facility to benefit the wider community and promote walking in the area.

Within the limitations of what is possible, equipment will be chosen that minimises light from the beacons being directed toward nearby properties and any necessary additional lighting will also be shielded.

- 4.6 The Sub-committee is asked to consider the feedback received against the proposal in Appendix 1 and can make the following decisions:
- Agree with objections - the recommended proposal will not be implemented
 - Overrule objections - the recommended proposal will be implemented, as advertised.
 - Amend a proposal - an amended proposal will be implemented, provided such proposed modifications do not compromise the legality of the consultation process. The detail of that amendment will need to be agreed by the Sub-Committee and officer representatives at this, or at a future, meeting.
- 4.7 Should the proposal be approved for implementation, it is expected that delivery will commence early next financial year and no materials will be ordered until after the decision has been made. A further independent road safety audit will be commissioned after the crossing has been fully installed.

Other Options Considered

- 4.8 Officers do not believe that there is another appropriate location for this crossing, where it would likely be used for the purpose intended - the further away it is positioned from the proposed location, the less likely pedestrians would be to make the detour to use it.

Placement of the crossing to the north of the junction with Oakley Road would necessitate the later crossing of Oakley Road to reach the school, so is also undesirable.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 This proposal contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan Themes, as set out below:

Healthy environment

The installation of zebra crossings is intended to improve the experience and perceived safety for pedestrians. Pedestrians will be more visible to motorists and vehicles will be required to stop for as long as is necessary for pedestrians to cross, without the use of traffic lights.

In complement to other Council initiatives, zebra crossings will contribute to encouraging people to make healthy transport choices through the removal of barriers toward doing so. This will contribute toward the Council's goal of making the town carbon neutral by 2030, through reducing emissions by private vehicle use.

The specific proposal in this report is primarily aimed to promote the greater uptake of active and healthy travel for school pupils.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 6.2 A Climate Impact Assessment has been conducted, which considers a net 'NIL' impact as a result of the Sub-Committee agreeing to the recommendations of this report.

The implementation of a zebra crossing does require a level of civil engineering work to be undertaken and the installation of electrically-powered beacons.

These will have a minor negative impact during installation and a very minor ongoing negative impact due to the continued energy use by the low-energy LED beacons. They will, however, be long-standing facilities and it is expected that the installation of these crossings will remove barriers that many people may have to walking, which will offset these impacts by a likely reduction in private vehicle journeys. This is particularly so with this proposed scheme, as it is on a journey desire-line to/from Caversham Primary School. While it is difficult to quantify, it is expected that the benefits will outweigh the impacts over time.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Statutory notification/consultation required for the zebra crossing proposal has been conducted in accordance with appropriate legislation. Notices of intention were advertised in the local printed newspaper and erected on lamp columns within the affected area. The Police are a statutory consultee and have also been directly notified. The consultation was hosted on the Council's website (the 'Consultation Hub'), where details and plans are also available.
- 7.2 Traffic Management Sub-Committee is a public meeting. The agendas, reports, meeting minutes and recordings of the meetings are available to view from the Council's website.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant as the proposals are not deemed to be discriminatory to persons with protected characteristics and statutory consultations provide an opportunity for the content of objections/support/concerns to be considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement the proposals.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Notice has been given for the implementation of a zebra crossing under Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The financial implications arising from the proposals set out in this report are set out below:-

10.3 Revenue Implications

	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Employee costs	NIL	NIL	NIL
Other running costs			
Capital financings costs			
Expenditure	NIL	NIL	NIL
Income from:			
Fees and charges	NIL	NIL	NIL
Grant funding			
Other income			
Total Income	NIL	NIL	NIL
Net Cost(+)/saving (-)	NIL	NIL	NIL

10.4 Capital Implications

Capital reference book: page	Programme from budget line	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Proposed Expenditure	Capital	£2	£48	NIL
Funded by Grant (specify)		Section 106 - Traffic Management Schools	Section 106 - Traffic Management Schools	N/A
Section 106 (specify)				
Other services				
Capital Receipts/Borrowing				
Total Funding		£2	£48	NIL

10.5 Value for Money (VFM)

The scheme has been investigated and designed by officers of Reading Borough Council and all civil engineering work will be undertaken by the Council's in-house delivery team. The exceptions will be specialisms that currently lay outside of the Council's resources, such as lining implementation, sign creation and the supply, installation and electrical connection of the zebra crossing beacons. However, these will be appointed through existing contracts and using

contractors that conduct these works to a scale that provides value for money through their chargeable rates.

A Road Safety Audit has been outsourced to a contractor with these specialisms, but also providing an independent perspective on the zebra crossing scheme designs, which can assist in defending potential challenges.

10.6 Risk Assessment

There will always be an element of financial risk regarding more complex works that require excavation and adjustment to the Highway layout. These risks should be minimised pre-excavation, as officer investigations have included colleagues from the delivery team. However, there is always a risk of unforeseen engineering challenges, even following the receipt of utility plans. It is beneficial that most of the civil engineering work is being conducted by Reading Borough Council, as this ensures close communication and true joint working throughout delivery.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 School Crossing Facility Upgrades (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, June 2019).